



THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2013

28TH NOVEMBER 2013

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**RUNNYMEDE
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION RESIDENCE
HILL STATION
Freetown
SIERRA LEONE**

It gives me great pleasure to present our first Annual Report. It was on March 2nd 2012 that this Chamber was launched on the back of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on investment and trade between the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom to facilitate co-operation to grow bilateral trade with the ambitious goal of bilateral trade surpassing UK aid by 2015.

The Chamber started with a small group of Platinum members who have formed the backbone of the organisation with continuing support. Today we have close to 40 members with six more in the pipeline.

Attached to this report are key points covering 2012-2013 for your records. You will see in the presentation pack, our two newsletters recording the events of the last year that many of you attended.

We represented the Chamber at The British Chamber of Commerce Annual Conference and International Forum 2012/2013. These conferences are important for us to connect with the UK, Europe and Commonwealth; the exchanging of ideas, developing new strategies to increase trade and investment to Sierra Leone.

We have been networking with the London Chamber of Commerce through overseas membership. We recently gave presentations to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce with one to one sessions with interested exporters and investors.

We are members of COBCOE (Council of British Chambers of Commerce in Europe) which represents British Chambers of Commerce and business groups around the world with head quarters in London. Members who wish to pursue these linkages may do so through the secretariat.

We mention these areas for networking and sourcing trading partners. Many of you will be aware of the UK Government Initiative "Exporting Is Good for Britain; Driving International Growth".

Business is good for the entire world to create employment. Members of this Chamber already employ thousands of Sierra Leoneans, increasing the numbers of employed month by month as new projects come on stream.

Looking forward the Chamber will continue to hold regular networking meetings at various venues to suit the occasion for informal discussions, particularly in capacity building and local content policy.

We will continue to partner with the Sierra Leone government to build a naturally beneficial relationship where the sharing of ideas are per se paramount.

As a Chamber we recognise we will always be relatively small in numbers and consequently our income is relatively small. We need to continue to understand and provide for the needs of members in the most cost effective manner.

We very much appreciate the sponsorships from The British High Commission and members including Standard Chartered Bank, CEC Group, London Mining, Cluff Gold, African Minerals Ltd, British Airways, Sam King, Country Lodge and Sweet Salone amongst others.

We continue to be a point of contact for investors and exporters to and from Sierra Leone.

Your executive this year took the decision to build a new website which would fulfil the member's needs both from sales and marketing point of view and finding much needed information.

Details of this are attached with this report (Key Points). It will have linkages to SLIEPA, Tax Authorities, Government legislations, trade figures etc.

Whilst attending meetings in London with The British Chamber of Commerce and UKTI, we held workshops on Trade and all agreed there was need for a simple means of connecting to all Chambers across the globe, where trade and investment opportunities can be found simply and quick.

Sierra Leone has been invited to go on the new British Chambers of Commerce website www.exportbritain.org.uk

Your executive took this on board and explored organisations capable of delivering an advanced website. We are pleased to announce that Brand Sierra Leone won this contract and we will shortly be going live.

Please ensure that your details have been sent to our Head of Marketing and Development Yema-May Alami. We believe the new website will be key to our success as far as new investments and trade is concerned.

We are also working to build relationships locally, with other foreign missions including China and Nigeria. The theme is to understand each other better both commercially and culturally in order to develop ways to work together to benefit all.

Your executive is reviewing the sub-committees and a number of members have shown interest in the Transport and Tourism Industry. Interested members should contact the secretary and put forward your thoughts and needs for example an event sub-committee may be useful.

I would now like to thank the Chamber team, our founding Secretary Idrissa Kamara who did so much in the early days, and welcome to our new secretary David Mansaray.

To Chris Robertshaw our Treasurer for sorting out the finances, subscriptions and getting the house in order with our auditors.

To Hussine Yilla and Sonia Barlatt for organising the events in our first year.

To Danielle Kidd and the High Commission team, past and present, for co-ordination and working with us on so many interesting meetings and discussions with members of the British and Sierra Leone government. A big welcome to our new team member Yema-May Alami for quickly settling in with The Chamber and heading up Marketing and Development.

We would like to record our thanks and appreciation to our first Deputy Chairman, High Commissioner Ian Hughes and his Deputy Michael Shearer for all their hard work, enthusiasm and advice in helping forming the Chamber and allowing last year the use of the great British asset, HMS Dauntless for our first trade exhibition. We now come to the present when we can officially welcome our Vice Chairman and British High Commissioner Peter West and thank him for inviting us to use his residence. A big thank you to all members for your support and valuable contributions especially the founding Platinum Members.

Clive Dawson M.B.E

Executive Chairman
28 Nov 2013